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ABSTRACT

This employer resource provides practical information and technical assistance on America's Workforce Network, a new national system of employment and training services. Five sections guide employers to services that assist in various areas. "Expanding Your Workforce" explains how employers can find and hire qualified workers; team with state and local service providers to recruit workers who may be getting laid off and match them to their need for skilled workers; access untapped populations looking for jobs; and find labor market information at national, state, and local levels. "Training Your Workforce" shows how to improve the skills of your workforce and find help for current employees. "Restructuring Your Workforce" details strategies and programs available to employers whose businesses are experiencing downsizing, restructuring, or closings. Information on preventing and managing a layoff or closing is provided. "Financing Your Workforce" provides employers with information on using tax credits for hiring job seekers from various target groups and examines other programs to financially assist employers and their workforce. "Accessing Workforce Resources" explains the America's Workforce Network one-stop access points. A glossary is appended. (YLB)

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WORKFORCE TOOL KIT

THE RESOURCE FOR EMPLOYERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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September 2000

Welcome to America's Workforce Network

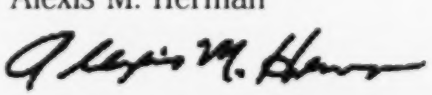
As a former small business owner, I know the challenges you face every day managing your workforce needs. We developed *America's Workforce Network*, the new national system of employment and training services, with those challenges in mind.

America's Workforce Network is designed to meet the needs of our 21st Century economy, bringing workers and employers together so that everyone thrives and our prosperity keeps growing. I often say that we do not have a worker shortage, but we do have a skills shortage. Nowhere is this shortage more acute than in the burgeoning high-tech field. For our nation to continue to prosper, every American must have the opportunity for training in the high-tech skills that are necessary to compete in the new economy.

America's Workforce Network is training the untapped pools of workers who want jobs, but lack the skills to get them. We're matching those workers to the jobs you need to fill. We're also helping you train the workers you already have. Like you, we know that all workers need the kinds of high-tech skills that can make or break a career, whether those workers are looking for work or are already on the job.

America's Workforce Network is a partnership bringing together business, government and the community to strengthen our economy by making sure no worker – potential or current – is left behind. I invite you to use the Network's resources and to become a partner in its success.

Alexis M. Herman



U.S. Secretary of Labor

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INTRODUCTION

America's Workforce Network is the name for the newly updated federally-sponsored nationwide employment and training system. America's Workforce Network is committed to the nation's workers and their employers: committed to helping workers get the skills they need to succeed in our high-tech world and committed to helping employers find the skilled workers they so desperately need. You will find a system that is updated, responsive and comprehensive, ready to meet your needs in a dynamic economy.

As Secretary Herman often observes, we do not have a worker shortage, but we do have a skills shortage. And the numbers bear that out. Even at near record low unemployment, six million Americans are unemployed and looking for work, four million have stopped looking but want work, and another three million are working part-time but want a full-time job. That's 13 million people who could be trained in the skills American businesses need in order to keep up in the global economy.

The new system is called a "network" because it offers a network of services and because it is created and maintained by a network of partners – workers, employers, federal, state and local governments, educational organizations and community- and faith-based groups. Whenever you see the America's Workforce Network name or logo, you can instantly recognize it as a sign of high-quality, customer-focused employment and training services.

HOW TO USE THE *WORKFORCE TOOL KIT*

The Workforce Tool Kit is organized in sections which guide you to services that assist in:

Expanding Your Workforce. This section explains how employers can find and hire qualified workers, even in a tight labor market. You will learn how to team with state and local service providers to recruit workers who may be getting laid off and match them to your need for skilled workers. In addition, you can access untapped populations that are looking for jobs including youth, older workers, welfare recipients, veterans and persons with disabilities. Labor market information is also readily available at the national, state and local level.

Training Your Workforce. This section shows how various types of training such as on-the-job and apprenticeship training will upgrade your employees' skills to maintain and improve your business's productivity and save you money by training current employees rather than hiring new ones. Available training options are described so you can assist your employees in accessing the training they need.

Restructuring Your Workforce. This section details several strategies and programs that are available to you if your business is experiencing downsizing, restructuring or closings. Information on preventing and managing a layoff or closing is provided including assistance available to you and your employees so you can access services immediately, become familiar with the legal requirements during a layoff situation and provide your employees assistance in making the transition to a new job.

Financing Your Workforce. This section provides you with information on using tax credits for hiring job seekers from various target groups and examines other programs outside America's Workforce Network to financially assist you and your workforce.

Accessing Workforce Resources. This section explains the America's Workforce Network one-stop access points. The AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) and www.usworkforce.org will help you find information on employment and training programs that fit your needs and help you locate a nearby One-Stop Career Center. America's Career Kit and other Web sites give you point-and-click access to an integrated suite of online workforce development tools. The Workforce Glossary also assists you in deciphering the many terms you may encounter in your search for workforce information.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

The programs and services that are described in this tool kit have all been developed in your community with the valuable input of many of your fellow employers. As a part of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, employers have a key role in guiding and monitoring the workforce system in every state and local area. Employers comprise a majority of the Workforce Investment Boards that are set up in your community to oversee the local system of programs that serves you, your employees and your community.

As an employer, you are able to participate in the continuous improvement of the workforce investment system and help to shape the future for the health and growth of your community through your state and local Workforce Investment Board. Use America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org to find the One-Stop Career Center nearest you and speak with a local representative to find out how you can get involved. Call the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or link to the National Association of Workforce Boards at www.nawb.org.

Employers are challenged to find qualified, available workers. America's Workforce Network offers convenient, no-cost resources available in your local community and on the Internet.

ONE-STOP SHOPPING FOR QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES

The local One-Stop Career Center is the heart of America's Workforce Network. This is where workers and employers connect. The center provides job search and skills training services to workers and recruitment services to employers. One-Stop Career Centers can make the match between workers who need jobs and companies that need employees. Here, you will find pre-screened applicants who have the qualifications you are looking for.

The One Stop Career Center will:

- Coordinate the initial communication between you and the pool of qualified workers in your area as well as outside your area.
- Offer pre-screening of workers so you know you are getting skilled applicants.
- Provide you access to detailed labor market information in your state and local area as well as nationally.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- To find your nearest One-Stop Career Center, use America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org or call the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS).

GO TO THE INTERNET FOR MORE ONE-STOP SERVICE

The Internet has opened a whole new world to employers who are looking for the most qualified workers in the nation. America's Workforce Network offers a group of Web sites referred to as "America's Career Kit." The sites include America's Job Bank, one of the most active job search sites on the Web. This service is free.

Through America's Job Bank, www.ajb.org, you can:

- Post job listings that get national exposure.
- Search over 700,000 active resumes.
- Reach thousands of workers who access the Job Bank daily.
- Link to local One-Stop Career Centers to create interactive, instantaneous job listings.

Recruiting Skilled Employees

America's Job Bank provides immediate one-stop access to skilled workers who are looking for jobs just like the one you are offering. It is one of the fastest ways to find workers.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Link to www.ajb.org directly or go to www.usworkforce.org to access America's Job Bank.
- The AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) also has information on America's Job Bank and its services.

The One-Stop Career Center gives you access to workers who have been trained in the skills that are in demand in your local labor market. When you use the One-Stop Career Center, you can be assured of finding qualified workers, many of whom are available from sources you may not have tapped.

The training and reemployment services that come under the umbrella of America's Workforce Network are developed to prepare workers who previously lacked the skills needed to succeed in today's workplace, especially high-tech skills. Many of the people who are referred through the center have considerable work experience.

One-Stop Career Centers put you in touch with prepared workers who represent:

- Youth
- Laid-Off Workers
- Older Workers
- Welfare Recipients
- Veterans
- Persons with Disabilities
- Ex-Offenders

YOUTH

Young people are eager to apply their skills in the workplace and enthusiastic about learning new workplace skills. They also bring new ideas to their work and familiarity with how to accomplish work tasks more effectively using computer-based technologies. Youth can get the job done and energize the workplace.

One-Stop Career Centers can connect you to these youth (ages 14-21) through a variety of national and state operated programs. Employers can hire trained youth for part-time or summer jobs or provide work-based learning opportunities that lead to stable job paths and careers.

America's Workforce Network has several initiatives that provide academic and occupational training for youth and connections to employers with unfilled labor needs. These initiatives include:

- Youth Activities @ www.usworkforce.org/resources/youthcouncils. States and local communities provide youth opportunities for training through effective services that include a variety of options for improving educational and skill competencies and connections to employers. Thirty-six communities nationwide also have resources to support the Youth Opportunity Movement, an initiative that

aims to increase the long-term employment of youth that live in inner-city, rural and high poverty areas.

- Job Corps @ www.jobcorpsworks.org. Job Corps is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training program for at-risk youth, ages 16 through 24. Since 1964, the program has provided more than 1.7 million disadvantaged young people with the integrated academic, vocational and social skills training they need to gain independence and get quality, long-term jobs or further their education. Job Corps gives employers people who are highly competent technically and knowledgeable about the workplace.

- School-to-Work @ www.stw.ed.gov. Through the School-to-Work initiative, employers in partnership with schools make the workplace an active learning environment. This is based on the proven concept that education works best and is most useful for future careers when students apply what they learn to real life, real work situations. Employer involvement continues to grow in School-to-Work across the country as you are able to reduce costs in recruiting, training and supervising by working with youth that are an available pool of workers that will continue to grow and prepare themselves for the workforce.

Youth Councils have been set up in many communities in conjunction with the Workforce Investment Board. They identify duplication and gaps in services and provide valuable guidance on the provision of comprehensive services and meeting the complex needs of youth and their employers.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.jobcorpsworks.org and www.stw.ed.gov for more information on these programs in your community and for contact information of the state coordinator.

- Go to your local One-Stop Career Center to find out more by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

LAID-OFF WORKERS

Laid-off workers, often called dislocated workers, are a pool of experienced workers, many of whom have the skills your business needs.

One-Stop Career Centers serve workers who have been laid off by assisting them find new jobs or learn new skills through training to move into a different career. By connecting with your local One-Stop Career Center, you can tap into a qualified source of job applicants that are pre-screened and ready for you to interview. Many of these laid-off workers will have received:

- Skills assessments
- Training opportunities
- Resume and interview skills training
- Job search assistance
- Local labor market information

Through these services, One-Stop Career Center staff helps you reach these qualified and ready-to-work applicants for your business.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.usworkforce.org/layoff for more information on services available to you to find laid-off workers and the services they receive.
- Go to your local One-Stop Career Center to find out more by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

OLDER WORKERS

The One-Stop Career Centers work with older workers by providing direct employment services and referring them for employment and training services to the Senior Community Service Employment Program. This program serves to train and employ persons with low incomes that are 55 years old or over in jobs and then assist them in finding job opportunities in the private sector.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Find your local One-Stop Career Center at the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or America's Service Locator www.servicelocator.org for valuable information on such programs for older workers and how employers can hire them.
- Go to www.doleta.gov directly or www.usworkforce.org for program information and how you can get involved as an employer.

WELFARE RECIPIENTS

Employers who have hired welfare recipients report decisively positive experiences. In a 1998 survey of Welfare-to-Work Partnership members, 76% of the respondents said the former welfare recipients they hired were productive employees and almost half reported the same or better retention rates as for employees hired through standard channels. Employers who have hired welfare recipients report the following benefits:

- Access to a larger, more diverse labor pool
- Good, productive workers
- Reduced employee turnover
- Subsidies and tax credits
- Improved human resource policies and morale for all entry-level staff

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.doleta.gov directly or to www.usworkforce.org for more information on how you can access welfare recipients.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about Welfare-to-Work by calling the National Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

VETERANS

American veterans are yet another source of qualified workforce power. Many of them have been through rigorous military training — everything from computers to cooking skills. Access to this wide array of skilled workers can be found through local One-Stop Career Centers and the UMET (Use your Military Experience and Training) Web site. The UMET Web site offers information and access to:

- Key skills and attributes of transitioning military personnel
- Comparability of military and civilian training
- Recognition of military training and experience
- Military records and transcripts
- Model employer-sponsored programs

These veterans have solid training through their military experience and are receiving the skills they need to transition into civilian careers.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.dol.gov/dol/vets/public/credentials/webshare/wwwroot/dol/index.htm directly or to www.usworkforce.org for more information on how you can access veteran workers.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about hiring veterans by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Employers often mistakenly believe that it costs too much to hire workers with disabilities. In fact, most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal. The President's Committee's Job Accommodations Network found that 62 percent of accommodations for workers with disabilities cost $1,000 or less.

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities offers several services that give you access to qualified workers:

- Workforce Recruitment Program. Through the Workforce Recruitment Program Database, you can fill your summer or permanent hiring needs with talented college students with disabilities. These candidates, from more than 150 colleges and universities, represent all majors, and range from college freshmen to graduate students and law students.
- Business Leadership Network. The Business Leadership Network (BLN) is a national program led by employers in concert with state and local government that engages the leadership and participation of companies to hire qualified job candidates with disabilities.
- Job Accommodations Network. The Job Accommodations Network (JAN) is a toll-free information and referral service at (800)526-7234 on job accommodations for people with disabilities; on the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and on resources for technical assistance, funding, education and services related to the employment of people with disabilities.
- High School/High Tech. The High School/High Tech program provides opportunities for students with disabilities to explore high-demand careers in science, mathematics and technology.

It offers students the chance to learn first-hand what it is like to work in high-tech environments through site visits, mentoring, shadowing and paid summer internships.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.pcepd.gov directly, www.usworkforce.org or www.disAbility.gov for more information on how you can access workers with disabilities.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about hiring persons with disabilities by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org. When you contact these sources, ask about other community resources available to assist in recruiting persons with disabilities.

EX-OFFENDERS

Many ex-offenders are being released back into their communities every year and are seeking jobs and the stability that a job brings. It is probably no surprise, though, that the biggest single factor leading to another incarceration is unemployment.

The Federal Bonding Program (FBP) has, over the last 30+ years, enabled thousands of ex-offenders to successfully transition back into the world of work. It is a business insurance policy that protects the employer in case of any loss of money or property for which the employee is responsible. About 40,000 applicants have obtained jobs due to being bonded and 99% have proven to be productive employees.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/FBP.htm directly or to www.usworkforce.org for more information.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about the Federal Bonding Program by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

Understanding Your Local Labor Market

Current and accurate information is important to managing your business. Through America's Workforce Network you get the up-to-date labor market information you need to evaluate the labor markets from which you recruit and plan for your future workforce needs.

Every state offers labor market information, population statistics and economic statistics that provide a profile of the labor markets and local economies in which you do business. You can periodically renew your understanding of the dynamics of your local labor market by visiting Web sites such as www.acinet.org/acinet/st_sear.htm, www.lmi-net.org/state2.htm, or www.state.nd.us/jsnd/related3.htm.

ACCESSING ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Understanding the overall economic and occupational climate will assist you in planning for your workforce needs. Information, such as industry trends, unemployment rates and the Occupational Outlook Handbook, provides guidance in preparing workforce recruiting plans and human resources programs that will create incentives for workers to stay and grow with your company.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is an independent national statistical agency that collects, processes, analyzes and disseminates essential statistical data to the American public, the U.S. Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, business and labor. The Bureau of Labor Statistics offers a comprehensive Web site (www.bls.gov) that you can access to find data and information such as:

- Employment and unemployment statistics
- Prices and living conditions
- Compensation and working conditions
- Productivity and technology
- Employment projections
- International programs

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.bls.gov directly or to www.usworkforce.org for more information on how you can access up-to-date and relevant labor market information.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about labor market information by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line

(877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

NEWEST WEB TOOLS FOR ACCESSING LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

A powerful Web-based tool to use in your search for qualified applicants and solid labor market information is O*NET Online (online.onetcenter.org). O*NET is a comprehensive resource of information about jobs and occupations. It integrates a database with a common language for describing jobs and skills descriptions to create a tool that is useful to businesses. You and your human resources staff will be able to use this information to:

- Develop concise job descriptions.
- Refine recruitment and training goals.
- Develop better job descriptions to target more qualified workers.
- Define success factors for promotion and advancement.

Another easy-to-use tool for accessing labor market information is America's Career InfoNet (www.acinet.org). This Web site accesses the ALMIS database and displays a variety of occupational, demographic and labor market information at the local, state, and national levels. America's Career InfoNet also includes an extensive collection of links to other Internet resources through its Career Resource Library. Through the Web site, you are also able to access America's Job Bank and America's Learning eXchange.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go directly to the Web addresses listed above or to www.usworkforce.org for more information on how you can access labor market information.
- Access these Web sites and other relevant labor market information at your local One-Stop Career Center by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

Improving the Skills of Your Workforce

Where is your industry moving? Do your employees or potential employees have the skills needed to help you grow? Many public programs are available to train your current workforce, sometimes with funding provided to either you or your employees directly.

TRAINING YOUR CURRENT WORKFORCE

Many large corporations are instituting their own in-house training to assure access to the skills they need and to stay competitive. Small businesses and firms face the same business need to have the skills available required for growth. From frontline workers to professional and management staff, the demand for training increases as industries and companies expand.

Incumbent Worker Training is an emerging service which helps employers train their current workforce. When fully developed by states, this training initiative will work to:

- Build a better system to support employer investments in training.
- Provide important information on incumbent worker training opportunities.
- Meet the needs of all sizes of companies.
- Examine the use of technology in training workers.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.usworkforce.org later this year for more information on how you may be able to access incumbent worker training.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center or your state's Dislocated Worker Unit about incumbent worker training by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

TRAINING THROUGH APPRENTICESHIPS

Registered apprenticeship is a formalized career-training program that offers a combination of structured on-the-job training and related theoretical instruction. As apprenticeship training standards are industry-driven, businesses play a major role in determining the skills that are essential to build and sustain a quality workforce.

The Apprenticeship Training Program safeguards the welfare of apprentices, ensures the quality and equality of access of apprenticeship programs and provides integrated employment and training information to sponsors and the local employment and training community.

Apprenticeship sponsors include individual employers, associations of employers or labor and management partnerships. Individual applicants for apprenticeship programs must be at least 16 years old and meet the program sponsor's qualifications. Generally, applicants must satisfy the employer sponsor that they have the ability, aptitude and education to master the rudiments of the occupation and complete the related instruction required in the program.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.doleta.gov/atels_bat directly or to www.usworkforce.org for more information on how you can setup an apprenticeship training program in your company.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about apprenticeship opportunities for your business by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

ONLINE SOURCE FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

To find resources for building employee productivity and worker skills, America's Learning eXchange (www.alx.org) gives you instant, free online access to the definitive database of workforce training and education opportunities. With 250,000 offerings from more than 5,000 providers, the training options on America's Learning eXchange are greatly varied and are sure to meet your needs to upgrade and advance your employees' skills. Through this Internet service, you will find information and tools that will help in making better business decisions about training options including:

- Benchmarking and determining return on investment.
- Guides for selecting providers and products.
- Checklists to assess the appropriateness of training technologies.
- Research about training and workforce development.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.alx.org directly or to www.usworkforce.org for more information on how you can learn about various training programs for your company.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about America's Learning eXchange by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

America's Workforce Network provides you with the tools you need to find educational opportunities on workplace issues to help your employees be productive.

FIGHTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

Employers confront social forces outside the workplace that affect their companies' productivity and growth, especially substance abuse. Approximately 71% of drug users in the United States are employed, costing American businesses billions of dollars annually in lost productivity and increased health care costs. In response, many employers have established workplace substance abuse programs to ensure that their workforces are productive, their workplaces are safe and the success of their businesses is not hindered by substance abuse.

Establishing a program in the workplace does more than decrease substance abuse just in the workplace. It significantly contributes to the creation of alcohol- and drug-free families, schools and communities. Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free American Workplace serves as a valuable educational resource for employers and employees in their fight against alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace.

According to Working Partners, substance abuse programs should include those components that you and your employees identify as important to the company. There are five standard components of a comprehensive workplace substance abuse program that you may want to consider. They include:

- A written policy statement
- Supervisor training
- Employee education and awareness
- Employee assistance for providing help
- Drug and alcohol testing

Where to Go for Assistance —

- To find out more about Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free American Workplace, go to www.dol.gov or email webwp@dol.gov.
- For more information about Substance Abuse in the Workplace training, call 1-800-WORKPLACE to access information and advice.

Even in a robust economy, you may need to engage in layoffs, downsizings and restructuring in order to adjust to changing technology and industry fluctuations. America's Workforce Network provides assistance to both employers and workers to manage these changes and lessen the impact on your employees and community.

RAPID RESPONSE — FINDING HELP FOR YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES

If you are reducing the size of your workforce, changing its skill mix or anticipating a business closure, Rapid Response services can help you meet your business needs while recognizing the needs of your employees and community. Your local Rapid Response team will be sensitive to your concerns such as confidentiality, maintaining productivity and transitioning your employees to new jobs or training.

The Rapid Response team will provide:

- An initial employer meeting to plan transition services for your employees.
- Presentations to your employees on available services.
- An on-site career center for your employees, when needed.
- Skill assessments of your employees both as a group and individually.
- Possible options to reduce or avoid the layoff.
- Coordination with outplacement services you may have hired.
- Access to One-Stop Career Center services your employees need.
- Applications for federal funds for your workforce.

The Rapid Response team can help you build into new jobs or training the services you need to manage the transition of your employees and ensure stability in the community in a positive and productive manner. In some states, the Rapid Response team can present options and provide assistance to employers and communities who wish to develop layoff aversion strategies, or who wish to link federal, state and local economic development activities with state and local business retention and recruitment activities.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Call 877-US-2JOBS and ask for your state's Dislocated Worker Unit.

- Access the employer section of the Dislocated Worker Web Site on www.usworkforce.org/layoff for more information.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LARGE EMPLOYER DURING A LAYOFF

In general, if you are a business that employs at least 100 full-time workers and are planning a layoff of at least 50 workers, you may be required by the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) to provide 60 days written notice to your workers, the state Dislocated Worker Unit and the chief elected official. This notice is the action that often triggers Rapid Response services.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Call 877-US-2JOBS to connect with your state's Dislocated Worker Unit for state-specific information.
- Check out www.doleta.gov/programs/factsht/warn.htm for detailed information on WARN or go to www.usworkforce.org.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

You can help your employees during a layoff to make the transition to new jobs or training by providing them information on income support assistance available to them.

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) @ www.doleta.gov/layoff/ui.htm. The UI program pays benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed and meet other state requirements. Also known as unemployment compensation, UI can help to preserve the economic health of communities by maintaining the purchasing power of these workers.
- Trade Readjustment Benefits @ www.doleta.gov/programs/tra.htm. Employees who have lost their job due to foreign competition or because the business moved to Canada or Mexico may be eligible for benefits under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act and/or the North American Free Trade Agreement-Transitional Adjustment Assistance.
- Health Benefit Options @ www.dol.gov/dol/pwba. Under what is often known as COBRA (the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act), your employees and their families may be able to purchase extended health coverage up to 18 months after a

layoff. Another law, the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA), provides for laid-off workers who may be eligible to enroll in a spouse's health plan under a special enrollment period.

- Pension Benefits Options @ www.dol.gov/dol/pwba. Employees who have been laid off and were active participants in your company's pension plan may be eligible to roll over vested pension benefits to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA).
- Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) @ www.doleta.gov/programs/disaster.htm. Laid-off employees may be eligible for DUA if they lose their job or have a significant interruption of work during a disaster as declared by the President of the United States and are not entitled to unemployment insurance. The employees who are able to use this program must meet certain state criteria.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Call the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) for more information and to contact your state's Dislocated Worker Unit to find out more.
- Link to the Web addresses listed above or go to www.usworkforce.org and find "Dislocated Workers" under the GO drop box.

TRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

As many employers are demanding a more highly skilled workforce, many workers want to improve their skills to make them more marketable and valuable to employers. These workers want to make more money, have job security and feel valued as a knowledgeable employee. However, training and higher education costs money that not all companies offer.

Through America's Workforce Network, Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are available to adult workers, including those who are unemployed or who are receiving a low wage. They can choose from a list of eligible training providers and make informed career choices using ITAs to pay for their training. ITAs offer American workers the chance to receive customized training that fits their needs and good consumer information on training providers.

You will benefit from ITAs because they help to build a larger pool of skilled workers who are on a career path of their choice.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center about Individual Training Accounts and how they work by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or accessing America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

If you are laying off workers due to import competition or because of a shift in production to Mexico or Canada, individualized assistance is available at no cost to help your employees under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement-Transitional Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TAA) programs. You may even file a TAA or NAFTA-TAA petition on behalf of your employees to certify them for benefits beyond those normally available under regular Unemployment Insurance.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

You can help your employees if they have been laid off or their hours and wages are reduced due to foreign competition. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is a federal program established under the Trade Act of 1974 and provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. It provides affected workers with the opportunity to engage in long-term training while receiving income support.

The TAA program provides a comprehensive, timely array of retraining and reemployment services to all affected workers. Services to eligible workers might include:

- Reemployment services
- Job search allowance
- Relocation allowance
- Training (on-the-job or classroom)
- Income support
- Subsistence allowance
- Transportation allowance

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Access the employer section of the Dislocated Worker Web Site on www.usworkforce.org/layoff for more information.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center or your state's Dislocated Worker Unit by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or find them at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

NAFTA-TAA

The North American Free Trade Agreement-Transitional Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TAA) program assists workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of imports from Canada or Mexico. The services provided are similar, if

not the same, as services under Trade Adjustment Assistance.

The NAFTA-TAA program offers help to employees whose companies have been directly or indirectly impacted as a result of imports from, or a shift in production to, Canada or Mexico, known as primary and secondary firms, respectively.

Primary firms are those, which are directly affected by imports from Canada or Mexico or have shifted production to Canada or Mexico. Secondary firms are those which supply primary firms and/or assemble or finish products of the primary firm. Employees of secondary firms that have obtained a NAFTA affirmative finding are eligible to receive services under dislocated worker programs authorized under the Workforce Investment Act.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Access the employer section of the Dislocated Worker Web Site on www.usworkforce.org/layoff for more information.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center or your state's Dislocated Worker Unit by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or find them at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

Using Employer Tax Credits

Tax credits are available if you hire many low-income workers such as welfare recipients, high-risk youth, veterans, food stamp recipients, vocational rehabilitation referrals and ex-felons.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal income tax credit that encourages you to hire eight targeted groups of job seekers. The WOTC can reduce your federal tax liability by as much as $2,400 per new hire. This employer tax incentive joins other employment programs and tax credit initiatives aimed at helping American workers and increasing American productivity and economic growth. The new hire must belong to one of eight WOTC target groups:

- Welfare recipients
- 18-24 year-old food stamp recipients
- Veterans
- Vocational rehabilitation referrals
- 16-17 year-old residents of Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities hired as "Summer Youth Employees"
- 18-24 year-old residents of Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities
- Ex-felons or work-release inmates from low-income families
- Recipients of Supplemental Security Income benefits

The WOTC for new hires employed 400 or more hours is 40% of qualified wages for the first year of employment; the credit for new hires employed 120 to 400 hours is 25%. Qualified wages are capped at $6,000 for all WOTC target groups except Summer Youth, whose wages are capped at $3,000.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Access the www.doleta.gov/employer/wotc.htm directly or www.usworkforce.org for more information on the WOTC.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or find them at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDIT

The Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit is a federal income tax credit that encourages employers to hire long-term welfare recipients. This tax credit can reduce your federal tax liability by as much as $8,500 per new hire. The people who qualify under this credit are:

- Those who have received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for a total of 18 months.
- Those lost their TANF eligibility as it expired under limitation imposed by federal or state law.

The Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit for your new hires employed 400 or more hours or 180 days is 35% of qualified wages for the first year of employment and 50% for the second year. Qualified wages are capped at $10,000 per annum.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Access the www.doleta.gov/employer/wtwweb.htm directly or www.usworkforce.org for more information on the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or find them at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org.

TAX CREDITS FOR HIRING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to tax credits for businesses that hire individuals who are referred from vocational rehabilitation agencies, two other business tax incentives are available to you:

- Deduction for cost of removing barriers to the disabled and elderly. You can take this deduction if you make your facility or transportation vehicles more accessible to and usable by workers who have disabilities or are elderly.
- Disabled Access Credit. This is a tax credit for an eligible small business that pays or incurs expenses to provide access to persons with disabilities. The expenses must be to enable your business to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Access www.dol.gov/dol/_sec/public/programs/ptfread/main.htm directly or www.usworkforce.org for more information on these tax credits.
- Contact your local One-Stop Career Center by calling the AWN Toll-Free Help Line (877-US-2JOBS) or find them at America's Service Locator at www.servicelocator.org

Other assistance for your business may be available for you if you are in an industry experiencing workforce fluctuations or you have a small business that is trying to compete and grow. Other businesses that may be located in a rural area or inner-city can receive assistance to enable growth in production and jobs.

HELP FOR MANUFACTURERS

If you have a small manufacturing business, you may face limited budgets, lack of in-house expertise and lack of access to the newest technologies. The Manufacturing Extention Project (MEP) can help your business overcome these barriers.

MEP is a nationwide network of not-for-profit Centers in over 400 locations nationwide, whose sole purpose is to provide small and medium-sized manufacturers with the help they need to succeed. The Centers, serving all 50 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, are linked together through the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Here are some examples where the MEP can help your business:

- Process improvement
- Quality management systems
- Business management systems
- Human resource development
- Market development
- Materials engineering
- Plant layout
- Product development
- Energy audits
- Environmental studies
- Financial planning
- CAD/CAM/CAE
- Electronic commerce/EDI

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.mep.nist.gov or call 1-800-MEP-4MFG to locate the Center closest to you.

SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

If you have a small business, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) can provide financial, technical and management assistance to you. SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. The SBA can assist you in finding:

- Loans to start, run, and maintain your business
- Government contracting opportunities through PRO-Net
- Subcontracting opportunities through SUB-Net
- Venture capital opportunities through ACE-Net

- International trade and export assistance through TradeNet
- Technology-based business information on Tech-Net
- Updated laws and regulations affecting small businesses

Where to Go for Assistance —

- All of these SBA programs can be accessed at www.sba.gov, recognized by Forbes magazine in its Best of the Web issue, or call 1-800-UASK-SBA (800-827-5722).

ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYERS IN RURAL AND INNER-CITY AREAS

If you have a business located in one of America's inner cities or distressed rural communities, you may be eligible for federal tax incentives or grants through the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC).

EZ/EC targets $2.5 billion in federal tax incentives and $1.3 billion in flexible grant assistance to distressed urban and rural areas. Rather than imposing restrictive federal mandates on America's communities, this effort recognizes that local residents know best how to solve their neighborhood's problems. And it rewards communities that bring together many local partners — residents, business people, state and local government, nonprofit institutions — to make these solutions a reality.

EZ/EC designations help 105 communities in 42 states to empower their residents and implement their visions for a better future.

Where to Go for Assistance —

- Go to www.ezec.gov or call (202) 619-7980 to locate the EZ/EC closest to you.

877-US-2JOBS or 877-TTY-JOBS

As a part of the One-Stop concept, America's Workforce Network's (AWN) Toll-Free Help Line has been launched to assist employers and workers in finding the necessary resources for their workforce needs in their state and local areas. You can call this number and receive general information about all major programs and services under America's Workforce Network including:

- Youth Employment
- Welfare-to-Work
- Apprenticeship Training
- Employment of Persons with Disabilities
- Rapid Response Services
- Training Programs
- Unemployment Insurance
- Restructuring/Layoff Services

You will also be able to access your state and local contacts to find out more about these services in your area. Also, www.servicelocator.org has all of these contacts for you in an easily searchable database.

The AWN Toll-Free Help Line started service in July 1999, helping you and other employers find information about the dislocated worker programs and services and other workforce development programs across the country. States and other agencies supply information that is stored in an automated database and used by customer service representatives at a state-of-the art national call center to provide answers to questions and to connect customers to the appropriate resource at the state or local level for accessing services.

Fast, accurate, and world-class service.

Information is available in multiple languages and TTY.
(For TTY, call 1-877 TTY-JOBS: 1-877-889-5627)

WWW.USWORKFORCE.ORG

USWORKFORCE.ORG is your one-stop Web site for information on relevant workforce issues, programs and connections. It represents an unprecedented collaboration between public and private sector groups and individuals to provide access to workforce information and resources and to apply that information toward innovative and effective partnerships and programs.

The usworkforce.org site provides information on:

- Recruiting Qualified Employees
- Connections to Pools of Untapped Workers
- Incentives to Employers
- Help to Employers During Downsizings or Layoffs
- Labor Market Information
- Workforce Development Opportunities
- Contacts to Professional Societies
- Unemployment Compensation
- Policies and Regulations that Affect Your Business

Just go to the navigation bar at the top and hit "Employers."

NEWEST SUITE OF ELECTRONIC TOOLS FOR EMPLOYERS

With more than seven million user sessions a month, employers looking to stay competitive in the digital age are discovering America's Career Kit. You are just a few clicks away from all the resources you need to support recruiting efforts and stay competitive.

America's Job Bank (www.ajb.org)
America's Job Bank gives you access to over 700,000 resumes online. You can type in your criteria including job title, skills required and geographic location of a job candidate. You can save your searches through the AJB Job Scout feature and reports will be sent to you when candidates matching your criteria enter their resumes. AJB is also the Web site for posting your job listings. You can find qualified applicants to fill critical job vacancies or new positions quickly.

America's Career InfoNet (www.acinet.org)
America's Career InfoNet (ACINet) is an electronic storehouse of comprehensive state and local labor market data not available anywhere else. You can review prevailing salaries and living costs in other markets to see if the salaries and benefits you are offering are competitive. Find information on general trends in the job market — what industries are the fastest growing, what occupations are declining in employment opportunities, what occupations are the highest paying. ACINet also provides information on what skills are necessary to perform specific jobs, and what specific tasks are involved in the job.

America's Learning eXchange (www.alx.org)
America's Learning eXchange (ALX) is a virtual yellow pages of training and education resources to ensure a well-trained and productive workforce. Courses range from traditional classroom settings to distance learning to meet the needs of your employees. ALX offers courses, seminars and degree and non-degree programs.

America's Service Locator (www.servicelocator.org)
America's Service Locator (ASL) gives employers a map and driving directions to the public service offices with information on career planing, recruiting employees, locating training, helping employees deal with job loss, finding child care facilities and more. By typing in your address and specifying what information you are looking for, employers are given contact information, a map and driving directions to the location nearest to them.

Adult Worker
An adult worker is age 18 and over and is eligible for employment and training services. Priority for certain services are given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals.

America's Career Kit
America's Career Kit is an integrated suite of Web sites that include America's Job Bank, America's Career InfoNet, America's Learning eXchange and America's Service Locator.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Employers with 15 or more employees and state and local government employment practices are covered. State and local governments are also prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities when providing programs, activities or services. In addition, the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in places of privately operated of public accommodation, including all hotels, restaurants, retail stores, places of recreation and in transportation services.

Apprenticeship Training
Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by individual employers, employer associations and joint labor and management partnerships.

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)
The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives workers who lose their health benefits the right to choose to continue group health benefits provided by the plan of a previous employer under certain circumstances.

Dislocated Worker
A dislocated worker is an adult who has been permanently laid off or has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment due to no fault of their own.

Dislocated Worker Unit
The state agency responsible for ensuring effective Rapid Response services for workers, employers and communities affected by plant closings and mass layoffs and for connecting those groups to other available services.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)
The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program provides for the payment of unemployment assistance to individuals not otherwise eligible for unemployment compensation, whose unimployment is the direct result of a major disaster as declared by the President of the United States.

Federal Bonding Program
The Federal Bonding Program offers services to employers free-of-charge and serves as an incentive to the company to hire a job applicant who is an ex-offender or has some other "risk" factor in their personal background.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) offers new protections for millions of American workers that improves portability and continuity of health insurance coverage.

Job Corps
Job Corps is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training program for at-risk youth, ages 16 through 24. Since 1964, the program has provided more than 1.7 million disadvantaged young people with the integrated academic, vocational, and social skills training they need to gain independence and get quality, long-term jobs or further their education.

Labor Market Information (LMI)
Labor market information provides statistics on occupational trends, unemployment rates and other economic statistics.

Manufacturing Extension Project (MEP)
MEP, accessed through www.mep.nist.gov, is a nationwide network of not-for-profit Centers in over 400 locations nationwide, whose sole purpose is to provide small and medium-sized manufacturers with the help they need to succeed.

North American Free Trade Agreement Act-Transitional Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TAA)
The NAFTA-TAA program assists workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of imports from, or a shift in production to, Canada or Mexico.

Older Worker
Older workers are people that are 55 years old or over. Those who are have low-income may receive services such as government subsi-

dized jobs and assistance in finding job opportunities in the private sector.

One-Stop Career Center
A One-Stop Career Center provides employers and workers with access and resources to obtain employment and training services at a single neighborhood location.

Pension Benefits
Workers who were active participants in an employer's pension plan may be eligible to roll over vested pension benefits to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or to a new employer's retirement plan.

Rapid Response
Rapid Response is the program that provides early intervention services designed to respond to layoffs of more than 50 employees before the layoff actually occurs. Rapid Response helps to transition workers into new jobs or training opportunities.

School-to-Work
The School-to-Work (STW) initiative establishes the infrastructure for a system that facilitates youth in building skill competencies, learning in a work-based environment and entering into employment that has continuing learning and career potential. STW is based on existing models and efforts such as career academies, youth apprenticeship, Tech Prep and cooperative education. The School-to-Work initiative makes the workplace an active learning environment.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
The TAA program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. Workers may be eligible for training, job search and relocation allowances, income support and other reemployment services.

Trade Readjustment Allowance
Trade Readjustment Allowance is an income support benefit available to those workers who were laid off or had hours reduced because their employer was adversely affected by increased imports from other countries.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) (a.k.a. Unemployment Compensation)
Unemployment insurance is a federal-state program that pays benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed and who meet other state requirements.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
The U.S. Department of Labor is charged with preparing the American workforce for new and better jobs, and ensuring the adequacy of America's workplaces. It is responsible for a wide variety of workplace activities for nearly 10 million employers and well over 100 million workers.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
The U.S. Small Business Administration provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses.

Veteran
Veterans have solid training through their military experience. Veterans are often directed to services that transition and enhance the skills they acquired in the military.

Wagner-Peyser Act
The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 provides for the establishment of a national employment service system and for federal-state cooperation in the promotion of such system.

Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit
Employers, by hiring eligible welfare recipients, can earn a Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Tax Credit for up to $3,500 for their first year of employment, and $5,000 for their second year of employment. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-170) was signed into law on December 17, 1999 and re-authorizes the Work Opportunity and WtW tax credits for a 30 month period through December 31, 2001, retroactive to the credits' expiration date of June 30, 1999. The re-authorization applies to individuals who began work for the employer applying for the credit on or after July 1, 1999, and before January 1, 2002.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
The Work Opportunity Tax Credit provides federal income tax credits for new hires from among eight target groups. An employer's federal income tax liability can be reduced by as much as $2400 per eligible hire.

Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN)
WARN offers protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide written notice 60 days in advance

of covered plant closings and covered mass layoffs. This notice must be provided to either affected workers or their representatives (e.g., a labor union), to the Dislocated Worker Unit and to the appropriate unit of local government.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provides the framework for a new national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet both the needs of the nation's businesses and the needs of job seekers and those who want to further their careers.

Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
In partnership with state and local elected officials, WIBs plan and oversee the state and local workforce investment system. These boards must have at least 50 percent of its members as representatives of private industry and business.

Youth
Youth who qualify for services are those who range from age 14-21, possibly in low-income family and face a variety of challenges in becoming self-sufficient and stable in their careers.